



## **Our club – your club**

### **“It’s the Pine Hill’s Way”**

At Pine Hills we strive to provide our players and supporters with the best possible resources and facilities. Each year improvements are made and across the coming season you will see a lot more.

Our field, batting cages and bull pens are some of the best in the country and we continue to improve the facilities for our spectators and visitors.

This did not happen overnight and a lot of hard work from some very dedicated volunteers went into providing these facilities. In fact, the work never stops. It takes a lot of hours to keep the facilities in good condition.

At Pine Hills we value the contributions made by past and current members. We value the contribution made by our sponsors. We value our players, our coaches, managers and scorers. We value the people who operate the canteen where we are always greeted with a friendly smile. We value the hard-working grounds and maintenance people who provide us all with a great playing surface and surrounds.

Whether you are a player, a coach or manager, a parent or avid supporter if there is something that needs to be done, we don’t wait for someone else to do it.

**We get on with the job!**

**Clubs are built around a hard work and playing ethic. We play the game hard, to win but always in the spirit of the game.**

**We respect our team mates, we respect our competitors, the umpires and supporters.**

**Take pride in your club.**



## Maintenance and Field Preparation



# Introduction

By design, a high percentage of the action that takes place during baseball games is concentrated on a relatively small percentage of the playing surface, the infield.

That's why two thirds of a team are stationed there, not to mention the umpires and at least one batter. Add up to three base runners to the mix, and a diamond can quickly turn into a whirlwind of activity.

Once the dust settles, however, it's up to our groundmen to put it back where it belongs, groom it, water it, mark it and get out of the way for another practice or game.

There is a lot of work that happens that you probably don't see.

Our players, coaches and managers gain the benefit of this hard work however they also have a role to play.

Following each training session or game the base paths and deco areas need to be raked and prepared, so they are ready for the next team.

The pitchers mound needs a rake and if you're the last team on the field the tarp needs to go on.

Then we have the batter's boxes and home plate. No one likes deep holes or an uneven surface so there is a bit of work to be done here as well.

Let me explain how all this works!

Every player, manager and coach are responsible for ensuring they work together with our grounds crew to ensure the field is properly maintained.

Remember, if a job needs doing we go on and do it. We DON'T leave it for someone else.

# Raking the Deco and Base Paths

## Infield Deco (dirt)

The club has provided a selection of rakes and drag mats which are to be used to level and fill holes on the dirt areas. No one likes a ball hitting a foot mark so its important these are filled and levelled.

The areas around second and third base take a pounding as the players slide into base. Dragging and raking the deco into these areas will help fill the holes.

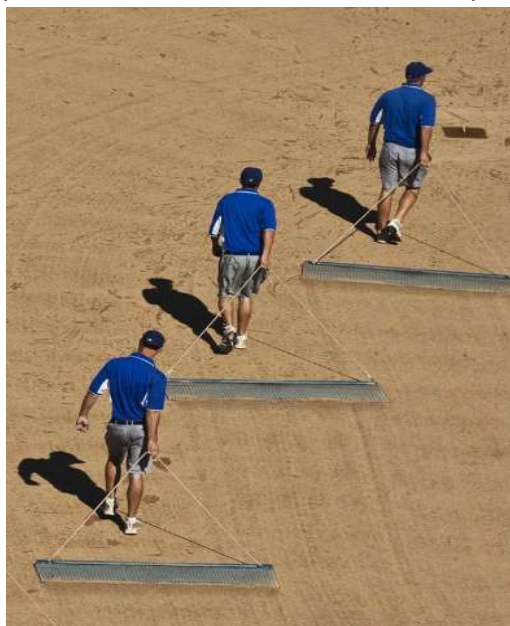
Players need to work together to ensure the whole area is raked. As shown in this photo each person is positioned so the mats overlap. This ensures all the deco is covered. On some occasions it might need a couple of passes.

Coaches please ensure you supervise your players. Show them if they are not sure but reinforce it is their field, and it's their job to look after it.

If the deco is not raked and we get a shower of rain or the sprinklers come on the holes or foot prints harden in the sun and become very difficult to remove.

After every training session the field should be raked. If multiple teams are training, the last team using the infield is responsible for the field.

The rakes and drag mats are located behind the home team dug out. When you have finished with them please put them back on the rack. A tidy club is a good club.



# Base Paths

Base paths MUST be raked the length of the path, NEVER side to side.

Raking the base paths is a key part of maintaining the infield. The dirt or deco needs to stay on the path. We do not want it on the grass as this builds up over time and creates unwanted lips or high points.

The greatest threats to player safety on any baseball infield are lips that form along the grass edges in front of and behind its dirt surface. The last thing we want to see is a player being injured.

Raking sideways or across the path creates a trench in the centre of the path which will hold water and pushes the dirt onto the grass. Coaches please supervise younger players and show them the correct technique.

During games and training deco will naturally flick onto the infield grass. Take a plastic rake and rake it back onto the path.

The blades on the mower don't like rocks or clumps of dirt so if you see any please pick them up and toss them into a garden, not inside the fence

The rakes are located behind the home team dugout.

## **Never rake across base paths.**

The deco gets onto the grass creating ridges or lips.  
Always rake length ways from home plate towards first and third keeping the rake approximately 10cms from the grass

**Remember! No dirt on the grass.**



# Bull Pens



The club has provided our players with purpose-built bull pens. There are four lanes so there is plenty of room for teams to train.

Pitchers it is your responsibility to rake the pens after use. Same goes for the catchers. Do NOT leave them un-raked. Deep holes develop and it is easy to roll an ankle. Two lanes have covers. This is to protect the surface and keep the moisture in.

Do NOT walk on the tarps (don't want holes) and cover them when you are finished.

A tap and hose are provided so if the deco is a little dry wet it down so its ready for the next team. Remember to rake it first.

Coaches please supervise younger players while they are in the bull pen. While it's important they learn the technique of throwing a good pitch it is equally important they learn how to maintain their specific training facility.

Any pitcher who wants to learn how to repair a mound should seek out the grounds crew or one of our senior pitches. They will show you how to repair a mound.

Pitches and catches this is your backyard. Please look after it.



# Batting Cages



The batting cages are a terrific all-weather facility.

Apart from hitting practice they are also suitable for pitching and field work. The internal netting can be dragged to one end, opening a massive area.

## **There are some rules.**

- Helmets – for your own safety ALL people throwing BP are to wear a helmet.  
**No excuses!**
- No cleats inside the facility.
- Rubbish -please use the bin and when its full, empty it. The rubbish goes into the industrial bin in the car park.
- Seeds – please do not leave the remains all over the floor. They are a pain to pick up.
- Equipment – balls, tees and the pitching machine are to go back into the shed after use. Do not leave them inside the cages.
- If you're the last team or player in the cages it is your responsibility to clean up and put the gear away.

If you see any damage or holes in the netting please advise the ground crew.

# Dug Outs



Your club has provided excellent dugouts which provide seating, storage areas and cold water.

This is the one area where it's the players and coach's domain. It would be reasonable to assume then the players should maintain it.

**Like the cages and other areas of the ground there are some rules:**

- Keep it clean. A broom is provided so give the floor a sweep.
- On game day the last team to use the dug out is responsible for cleaning it.
- On a weekend we can have a full roster of games. Each team **MUST** clean the dugout before the next team comes in. No Excuses. Coaches please police this as every team needs to support their clubmates.
- Rubbish goes in the bin and again at the end of the day or if it is full throughout the day empty it in the industrial bin in the car park.
- Take your gear with you. Don't leave bats, yes people regularly leave bats behind, gloves, helmets etc with you.

**The Dug Out is every players responsibility. Keep it clean!**



# Home Plate and the Pitcher's Mound

## Home Plate



In between seasons the grounds crew repair the home plate area. The deco is cleared off the batter's boxes and catcher's area and if required new clay bricks are installed.

Earlier this year it was completely replaced with new clay bricks laid.

The clay sits just under the surface of the deco. If you scratch the surface you will see the dark coloured clay. You will also notice how level this area is. There should not be any ridges or high areas.

After a game the players are asked to lightly spread the deco over the whole area. You do NOT have to repair the boxes.

During the week the grounds crew will repair the boxes with clay ensuring week to week the players have a solid base to work with.

The tarp is there to keep the moisture in the ground, not so much to keep the rain off although it obviously helps.

Never run or walk on the tarps with your cleats on. It creates holes and ruins the tarps.

Footnote: Can batters please refrain from scratching out the surface. You're not a chicken.

# Pitcher's Mound



This is one area where most players do not go near. It's the home of specialists! Those who have the difficult task of getting the ball over the plate. It is also an area where maintenance is important.

Each pitcher likes to know their back foot is comfortable and their front foot lands on an even surface. Like the home plate the grounds crew and some of our more experienced pitchers will maintain the mound.

After a game or practice the mound should be lightly raked. On game day there is no need to have the clay re-packed. This is something that will be done through the week.

If it's a very dry hot day a light sprinkle with the hose will keep the moisture in. Because we keep the mound covered this would be very rare.

Dirt will gather around the grass just off the mound. Please use a plastic rake to put it back onto the mound. Again, if left unattended a high point will occur.

The tarp is there for a few reasons. It is there to keep the moisture in the soil. That is why the mound is nearly always covered. It also provides protection from showers, storms and the irrigation.

The tarp should always be returned after practice and following the last game of the day. Be sure it does not sit on the grass as the vinyl combined with the heat from the sun will burn the grass.

When it's taken off please fold it and use the wheelbarrow to store it behind the home dug out.

Younger players are encouraged to learn how to maintain the mound. Ask the groundsman or senior pitchers for assistance.

**NEVER walk on the tarp with cleats.**

## Live Batting Practice

Live hitting is an important part of practice. We encourage it however you need to be aware of the wear and tear that can occur.

The tarp needs to be removed and folded up. If the sun is still out do NOT leave it on the grass. It gets hot and burns the grass. Move it out of the way and remember do not walk on it.

Coaches or teammates throwing BP **MUST** use a mat if throwing from the infield grass. These are located behind the home team dug out. The damage to the infield caused by people throwing from the same spot will not be tolerated. Use the mat. No Excuses. L frames are in the batting cages and must be used. Pitches please use a helmet.

## Infield Outfield Training

Coaches we ask that help us in this area.

Over past seasons we have seen a lot of damage to the infield which is caused by coaches standing on the grass infield hitting balls out to the players and the number of base balls that are hit directly into the grass.

Coaches standing in the one spot throwing BP burns and wears out the grass the balls create holes in the infield.

This year all coaches are to stand in front of home plate on the deco. You are not to stand on the infield grass.

A large mat is to be placed from the front edge of the deco onto the grass. This will stop the holes that occur when the ball is hit straight into the infield. You can imagine the damage this causes with so many teams training.

The mat will be stored behind the home teams dug out. When you are finished do not leave the mat on the grass.

**Note: Sorry but this is a non-negotiable.**

We must protect our field and this training drill causes a lot of damage.

## The Grounds Crew

You will see a lot of improvements with changes to the fields and a new field currently being developed behind the main diamond. It's great for the club but it does bring some challenges.

We need some help. If we can get some more volunteers to help it will ease the workload of the few people who deliver you the very best field they can. If we can get just a few more people to do even just a little bit, it would be great. As the new field comes on board it will be essential.

## Line Marking

This is an area where we always need some help. The outfield lines are painted yes, we use paint while the base lines are in chalk.

If you have some time and would like to help this is a job that does not take much time but is essential for a game to take place.

The team with the first game of the day is responsible for marking the lines and home plate if they have not been done by the grounds crew.

Both markers are currently located in the shed although they will be moved to a new smaller shed that will go behind the home team's dug out. The batting box frame is always behind the dug out.

If you need to do the lines and are not sure how to use the marker's, please ask the grounds crew and they will show you.

**Remember** – don't wait for someone else to do a job, jump in yourself.

# Mowing

Our club has several fields and it takes a lot of time to maintain. Fortunately, the council mow the junior fields and the outfield on the main diamond while we look after the infield. To keep the infield in top condition we are using a greens mower. It cuts the grass well and gives the players a terrific surface.

With an extra field coming it will double the amount of work we need to do so we will need more helpers.

Maintaining and servicing the mower is an ongoing task. Like anything mechanical it needs constant attention.

If you can help with the mowing or maintaining the equipment please let us know.